Maria Padilla

Maria Padilla is a *melodramma*, or opera, in three acts by Gaetano Donizetti. Gaetano Rossi and the composer wrote the Italian libretto after François Ancelot's play. It premiered on 26 December 1841 at La Scala, Milan. The plot is loosely based on the historical figure María de Padilla, the mistress of Pedro the Cruel, King of Castile.

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Performance history

The American premiere took place in 1990 when the young Renée Fleming made her major debut with Opera Omaha.[1] Among other performances, the opera was presented by the Buxton Festival in 2003[2] and by the Minnesota Opera in 2005.[3]

Roles

Maria Padilla	
Opera by Gaetano Donizetti	
Gaetano Donizetti, portrayed by Joseph Kriehuber in 1842	
Librettist	Gaetano Rossi Donizetti
Language	Italian
Based on	François Ancelot's play about María de Padilla
Premiere	26 December 1841 La Scala, Milan

Role	Voice type	Premiere cast, 26 December 1841[4] Conductor: Eugenio Cavallini
Donna Maria Padilla, *Ruiz' daughter*[5]	soprano	Sophie Löwe
Donna Ines Padilla, *Ruiz' daughter*	mezzo-soprano	Luigia Abbadia
Don Pedro, *prince of Castile*	baritone	Giorgio Ronconi
Don Ruiz di Padilla	tenor	Domenico Donzelli
Don Ramiro, *duke of Albuquerque*	bass	Gaetano Rossi
Francisca	mezzo-soprano	Teresa Ruggeri
Don Luigi, *count of Aguillar*	tenor	Ranieri Pochini
Don Alfonso di Pardo	bass	Agostino Berini
Bianca di Francia	silent	
Gentlemen, Castilian and French dignitaries, hunters, vassals of Padilla, guards, Castilian and French pages		

Sophie Löwe, who created the role of Maria Padilla

Synopsis

Place: Castile
Time: 14th century

Maria tells her sister Ines that she hopes to marry Don Pedro, the ruler of Castile. When he sneaks into her room disguised as Mendez, Maria tells him that she knows his true identity and demands marriage to save her honour. Don Pedro acquiesces, although the marriage must be kept secret. After their elopement, a faction of the Don Pedro's court wants him marry Bianca, a Bourbon princess, in order to avoid a civil war. He appears to be negotiating this, despite his secret marriage to Maria.

Meanwhile, Maria's father, Don Ruiz di Padilla, appears at the court. Believing that she is merely Don Pedro's mistress, he challenges the prince to a duel, but is led away in disgrace. Maria visits her father and tries to explain that she is the secret wife of Don Pedro, but her father refuses to listen.

Much to Maria's horror, Bianca arrives at the court, and is welcomed by Maria's enemies there as Don Pedro's bride and their queen. Instead, Don Pedro proclaims Maria as his queen and she dies of joy. (In the original ending which was changed by the censors, Maria grabbed the crown from Bianca's head and then committed suicide.[6])

Recordings

Year	Cast: Maria, Ines, Ruiz, Pedro	Conductor, Opera house and orchestra	Label[7]
1980	Lois McDonall, Della Jones, Graham Clark, Christian du Plessis	Alun Francis London Symphony Orchestra and Geoffrey Mitchell Choir	CD: Opera Rara Cat: ORC6
1990	Renée Fleming, Stella Zambalis, Hans Gregory Ashbaker, Motti Kaston	John DeMain Opera Omaha Orchestra and Chorus (Recording of a performance in the auditorium of the Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska, September)	CD: Premiere Opera Cat: CDNO 8932

References

1. Leo Dagambina, "Opera Omaha Presents the American Premiere of *Maria Padilla* Starring Renée Fleming" (http://leoadambiga.wordpress.com/2011/09/26/from-the-archives-opera-comes-alive-behind-the-scenes-at-opera-omaha-staging-of-donizettis-maria-padilla-starring-rene-fleming/), leoadambiga.wordpress.com. Retrieved 1 November 2013
2. "Donizett's Maria Padilla" (http://www.donizettisociety.com/Pastproductions2003/BuxtonMariaPadilla/BuxtonMariaPadilla.htm). *donizettisociety.com*. Retrieved 20 April 2018.
3. "Maria Padilla" (http://www.donizettisociety.com/Pastproductions2003/MinnesotaMariaPadilla/articleMinnesotaMP.htm). *donizettisociety.com*. Retrieved 20 April 2018.
4. Casaglia, Gherardo (2005). "*Maria Padilla*, 26 December 1841" (http://almanac-gherardo-casaglia.com/index.php?Giorno=26&Mese=12&Anno=1841&Testo=Maria_Padilla&Parola=Stringa). L'Almanacco di Gherardo Casaglia (in Italian).
5. Premiere cast and conductor from Casaglia
6. Ashbrook, William (1982). *Donizetti and His Operas*. Cambridge University Press. p. 572. ISBN 0-521-23526-X.
7. Source of recording on operadis-opera-discography.org.uk (http://www.operadis-opera-discography.org.uk/CLDOMARP.HTM)

Further reading

- Allitt, John Stewart (1991), *Donizetti: In the Light of Romanticism and the Teaching of Johann Simon Mayr*, Shaftesbury: Element Books (UK); Rockport, Massachusetts: Element, Inc. (US)
- Ashbrook, William (1998), "Donizetti, Gaetano" in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, Vol. One. London: Macmillan Publishers, Inc. ISBN 0-333-73432-7 ISBN 1-56159-228-5
- Ashbrook, William and Sarah Hibberd (2001), in Holden, Amanda (ed.), *The New Penguin Opera Guide*, New York: Penguin Putnam. ISBN 0-14-029312-4. pp. 224 – 247.
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- Osborne, Charles, (1994), *The Bel Canto Operas of Rossini, Donizetti, and Bellini*, Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press. ISBN 0-931340-71-3
- Sadie, Stanley, (ed.); John Tyrell (exec. ed.) (2004), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. 2nd edition. London: Macmillan. ISBN 978-0-19-517067-2 (hardcover). ISBN 0-

19-517067-9 OCLC 419285866 (https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/419285866) (eBook).
- Weinstock, Herbert (1963), *Donizetti and the World of Opera in Italy, Paris, and Vienna in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century*, New York: Pantheon Books. LCCN 63-13703 (https://lccn.loc.gov/63013703)

External links

- *Maria Padilla* (Donizetti): Scores at the International Music Score Library Project
- Donizetti Society (London) website (http://www.donizettisociety.com/index.html)
- Libretto (http://www.karadar.com/Librettos/donizetti_MARIA_PADILLA%20.html) (Italian)

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This page was last edited on 21 February 2021, at 20:21 (UTC).

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